



# 17. OUTDOOR RECREATION

According to the *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*, outdoor recreation is the second highest reason why people live in Alaska, and 71% of Alaskans believe that good hunting and fishing are important.

Fort Greely is a large, relatively undeveloped open space. This open space and the outdoor recreation opportunities associated with it are perhaps Fort Greely's best attributes in terms of community quality of life. With ever-increasing time to pursue recreational interests, the general public will undoubtedly place more demand on Fort Greely's natural resources.

## 17-1 Objectives

### Military Readiness

- ▶ Manage outdoor recreation consistent with needs of the Fort Greely military mission.

### Stewardship

- ▶ Monitor and manage soils, water, vegetation, and wildlife at Fort Greely with a consideration for all biological communities and human values associated with these resources.

- ▶ Provide human-valued products of renewable natural resources when such products can be produced in a sustainable fashion without significant negative impacts on the military training mission.
- ▶ Involve the surrounding community in Fort Greely's natural resources program.
- ▶ Manage outdoor recreation while maintaining ecosystem integrity and function.
- ▶ Control the use of off-road vehicles in terms of damage to ecosystem functionality.

### Quality of Life

- ▶ Provide high quality opportunities to the Fort Greely community and the general public for hunting, trapping, and fishing within biological and recreational carrying capacities of the resources.
- ▶ Provide high quality natural resources-based opportunities for other outdoor recreation, such as hiking, skiing, snowmobiling, rafting, birding, etc.

### Compliance

- ▶ Manage natural resources within the spirit and letter of environmental laws, particularly the Sikes Act upon which this INRMP is predicated.
- ▶ Implement this INRMP within the framework of Army policies and regulations.

## 17-2 Outdoor Recreation Management

### 17-2a Outdoor Recreation Management Plan

**Project Description.** Prepare, update, and implement an outdoor recreation management plan for Fort Greely.

**Project Justification.** Military and public demand for outdoor recreation on Army posts in Alaska is high. The management of outdoor recreation is consistent with ecosystem management principles and is required by the Sikes Act and AR 200-3.

**Project Prescription.** This chapter constitutes the recreation management plan for Fort Greely. Over the next five years, updating and implementing this plan will be required to carry out the projects listed below.

### 17-2b Manage Recreational Use and Impacts

**Project Description.** Manage recreational use on Fort Greely.

**Project Justification.** Recreational use, both legal and illegal, impacts the ecosystem and military training lands. If recreational use is not managed, conflicts will continue to occur and recreational use may be limited by the Command. Management of recreational use is a requirement of AR 200-3 and the Sikes Act.

**Project Prescription.** Management of recreation include installing barricades and fencing to control illegal trespass, designating areas for legal use, developing and installing signs, improving access for rafting opportunities, and improving access for hunting opportunities.

#### 17-2b(1) Control Access

**Description.** Control access to areas that are off-limits due to military training, safety concerns, cultural sites, or environmental issues. Public accessibility to Fort Greely is a tradition. The installation falls within the ADF&G Fairbanks and Delta Junction fish management areas, and Management Units 20A and 20D for hunting and trapping. Recreational access is managed according to Department of Defense Directive 4715.3, AR 200-3, and the *Fort Greely Resource Management Plan* (BLM and U.S. Army, 1994).

**Methods.** Little of the installation's boundary is fenced. In maintaining a policy of public access, Fort Greely relies on a responsible public to adhere to restrictions placed on range access through Range Control.

#### 17-2b(2) Manage Backpacking and Hiking Areas

**Description.** Manage backpacking and hiking areas. Public accessibility for backpacking and hik-

ing is regulated by Department of Defense Directive 4715.3, Army Regulation 200-3, and the *Fort Greely Resource Management Plan* (BLM and U.S. Army, 1994).

**Methods.** Hiking, berry picking, bird watching, nature study, and wildlife viewing is moderately popular on Fort Greely. The most common hike people take is to the top of Donnelly Dome. USARAK will look at creating other hiking trails to points of interest, such as the more remote lakes. USARAK will maintain the Donnelly Dome trail by assisting BLM with its upkeep.

#### *17-2b(3) Manage ORV Areas*

**Description.** Manage areas where ORV activity occurs. ORV use on Fort Greely is regulated by USARAK Regulation 190-13 (Enclosure E-3), AR 200-3, and the *Fort Greely Resource Management Plan* (BLM and U.S. Army, 1994).

**Methods.** Off-road vehicles have great potential for damaging natural resources, although there is little ORV damage on Fort Greely. Army policy on ORVs is very restrictive. Use of privately owned ORVs is allowed on a limited basis. Vehicles commonly used as ORVs must remain on designated trails and roads. The *Fort Greely Resource Management Plan* (BLM and U.S. Army, 1994) forbids ORVs to travel along the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System work pad without permission of Alyeska Pipeline Service.

#### *17-2b(4) Enhance Fishing Opportunities*

**Description.** Improve access to popular fishing areas stocked by ADF&G on Fort Greely. Also, remove undesirable fish and prevent their return into three lakes along Meadows and Windy Ridge Roads on Fort Greely.

**Methods.** Areas to improve access will be chosen based on the fishing lake survey described in Sec-

tion 12-2i(2). Improvements will be based on needs, personnel available, and funds. Improvements could include trail maintenance, building-up banks, trash removal, boardwalk construction, and other improvements.

A few Fort Greely lakes, J-Lake, Nickel and Chet Lakes, contain excessive biomass of undesirable fish, principally northern longnose suckers. They affect the growth and survival of game species. Fort Greely and ADF&G personnel will cooperatively use Rotenone to remove most of this biomass and restock these lakes with game fish. Because undesirable species can move back into these lakes during periods of high water, gambian dams will be constructed downstream of the outlet of J-Lake and at the outlet of the unnamed lake immediately below J-Lake. Gambian dams are large rock structures that allow water, but not fish, to flow through.

#### *17-2b(5) Manage Other Recreational Opportunities*

**Description.** Manage other recreational opportunities such as hunting, trapping, skeet shooting, downhill and cross-country skiing, predator calling, and similar activities. Fort Greely will support a variety of recreational opportunities to maintain a high quality of life for the Fort Greely and surrounding communities.

**Methods.** Hunting, for the most part, is managed by ADF&G. USARAK will support the hunting program as much as possible. Fort Greely will maintain its two ski slopes, Black Rapids and Fire Tower Hill. Other activities will be supported when they do not interfere with the military mission or environmental constraints, and when funding and personnel are available.

